

Letter from Chief Lansdowne: December 2003

As promised, the San Diego Police Department -- and more specifically the Chief's Office -- will continue publishing monthly letters discussing any major concerns the community has shared. Based on last month's meetings, I came away with two common concerns. First, there is confusion on the Department's operational structure and how to access the Department to get police-related problems solved. The second issue is based solely on the many requests I received for holiday shopping safety tips.

I will briefly describe how to access the Police Department by outlining its overall structure. The San Diego Police Department Headquarters is located in downtown San Diego. Headquarters houses many of the Department's administration offices, as well as the centralized investigation units such as homicide, robbery, narcotics, and sex crimes. Each centralized unit has a separate chain of command from captain, lieutenant, sergeant and detective. Each unit has their own phone number, which can be obtained from the [Headquarters Directory](http://www.sandiego.gov/police/about/directory.shtml) (<http://www.sandiego.gov/police/about/directory.shtml>).

In addition to Headquarters, there are eight decentralized police stations and one traffic division within the city. Each area station has one Captain who oversees the daily operations. Under the captain, lieutenants are responsible for specific geographical areas within the station's boundaries; the lieutenants are a good source of contact for police-related concerns. Each lieutenant has many sergeants and detective sergeants that are the direct line supervisors for the patrol officers and area station detectives. The area station detectives handle person and property crimes that don't fall under the criteria of a Headquarters centralized investigation unit. The area stations also have storefronts strategically located throughout the city to further branch out into the community. The stations and phone numbers can be found on the [In Your Neighborhood](http://www.sandiego.gov/police/neighborhood/index.shtml) (<http://www.sandiego.gov/police/neighborhood/index.shtml>) page.

As for holiday shopping safety tips, I will include some basic suggestions below. A complete list can be obtained from the [Holiday Safety Tips](http://www.sandiego.gov/police/prevention/holiday.shtml) (<http://www.sandiego.gov/police/prevention/holiday.shtml>) page.

- Lock packages in the trunk
- If you shop in the evening, park in a well lit area and shop with a friend
- Don't carry or flash large sums of cash
- If you are a victim of a crime, report it to police immediately

I look forward to hearing from the community, and I thank you for helping make San Diego America's finest place to work and live.

Chief William Lansdowne